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# Afghan army collaboration with rebels infuriates Soviet command

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Collaboration between the Afghan army and the mujahideen resistance has so infuriated the Soviet high command in Kabul that the Russians are now giving their allies only four hours notice of troop movements.

Western diplomats say the order was issued following the arrest last week of four Afghan army generals accused of passing information to the resistance.

Ironically, the Afghan armed forces were strongly pro-Soviet before the Russians invaded their country in 1979. Many Afghan officers had been trained in the U.S.S.R. and some of them had become agents of the KGB and Soviet military intelligence, the GRU. They staged the coup that brought a communist regime to power in Kabul in April 1978.

When the Russians arrived, the Afghan army numbered about 90,000, but battle losses and defections in the past six years have reduced this figure to about 30,000. Large numbers of defectors continue to deplete army ranks, and the

conscripts who replace them do not want to fight.

Intelligence sources in Washington say the Russians have stepped up surveillance on Afghanistan's border with Pakistan not only to prevent infiltration by the mujahideen but also to stop deserters fleeing the country.

The U.S. officials also report that despite recent Soviet statements suggesting a willingness to negotiate peace in Afghanistan, there has been a marked increase in Soviet arms shipments there in recent weeks.

Soviet troop strength remains the same at 115,000, the intelligence sources said, but the Soviets have upgraded their firepower with additional howitzers and other artillery, more ground attack planes, and Hind-D helicopter gunships.

"What it shows is that while the Russians are talking one way they're going in-country with equipment that demonstrates their real inten-

tion... a military victory," said one U.S. official. "Normally there is not that much fighting during the winter, but this winter we are seeing the Russians engaged in some very aggressive field operations."

Adhering to Moscow's instructions, Babrak Karmal, the Afghan leader, has rejected an offer by President Reagan to serve as guarantor of a peace settlement in his country. In an interview with a Japanese newspaper, Mr. Karmal ruled out any possibility of negotiating with the resistance, although he revealed that his government had made "some progress" in its indirect talks with Pakistan.

While Karmal's puppet regime

toes the Russian line, the Afghan army does not. Diplomats in Islamabad report that Russian troops have become so wary of their allies they now feel it is more dangerous to have Afghan soldiers behind them than resistance fighters in front. And resistance sources in Peshawar, Pakistan, say it is common for the Soviets to place Afghan soldiers in front of their advancing troops to draw fire and set off land mines.

The Russians also have established inner defensive perimeters on their bases to protect themselves from their allies. This paid off last June when dissident Afghan officers

at Shindand air base blew up 20 of their planes — a quarter of the Afghan air force — to protest the execution of three Afghan pilots who had refused to bomb nearby villages. The Soviet sector of the base was undamaged.

The disaffection of the Afghan air force, which had been the most pro-Soviet element of the Afghan armed forces, was further underlined in July when seven Afghan officers defected to Pakistan with their two

MI-24 gunship helicopters. This was the first time the MI-24 had fallen into the hands of a country friendly to the West, and Western intelligence has since learned a lot about the workhorse of the Warsaw Pact military.

The resistance requires a defector to bring with him at least one Kalashnikov automatic rifle. If he brings more than one or some particularly valuable weapon like an RPG rocket launcher, the defector gets especially good treatment, and

if he can prove he killed a Soviet soldier before fleeing, he is treated as a hero and generously rewarded.

Resistance sources in the Pakistani border city of Peshawar say the quality of the weapons brought by defectors has improved markedly. They are bringing not only guns but armor and other heavy weapons. One mujahideen unit now has 10 Soviet-built tanks.

In September the politburo of the Afghan Communist Party severely criticized the Afghan officer corps for lacking discipline and a will to fight. In October Kabul radio announced the arrest of military officers as well as party and government officials in Logar province, south of the capital.

The province has been the scene of heavy and bloody fighting between Soviet forces and the resistance. Those arrested were charged with plotting against the regime of President Karmal, but the wording of the charges indicated they had cooperated with the resistance.

There have been many firefights between Afghan troops and Soviet soldiers, usually when the Afghans try to stop the Russians from murdering, raping and robbing Afghan civilians. Resistance sources in Peshawar linked the Logar arrests to such clashes.

While defectors provide a constant flow of arms to the resistance, the rebels are not getting what they really need — effective anti-aircraft weapons. Michael Barry, a 36-year-old American anthropologist and Islamic scholar who has made 16 trips to Afghanistan, blames this on the United States.

In an interview in Paris recently, Mr. Barry told The Washington Times that Washington is pursuing a "half-hearted, no-win" policy toward Afghanistan that is "carefully designed not to antagonize the Soviets." As a result, he said, the Russians are gradually winning a campaign aimed at depopulating the country's richest agricultural regions and are hastening the exodus of hundreds of thousands of war-weary Afghans now faced with a bleak choice between death from aerial bombardment or death through starvation.

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A village-by-village survey conducted by the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights revealed that the depopulation ratio has already reached 56.4 percent. This means more than half the population of Afghanistan has fled, joining more than 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and 1.5 million in Iran.